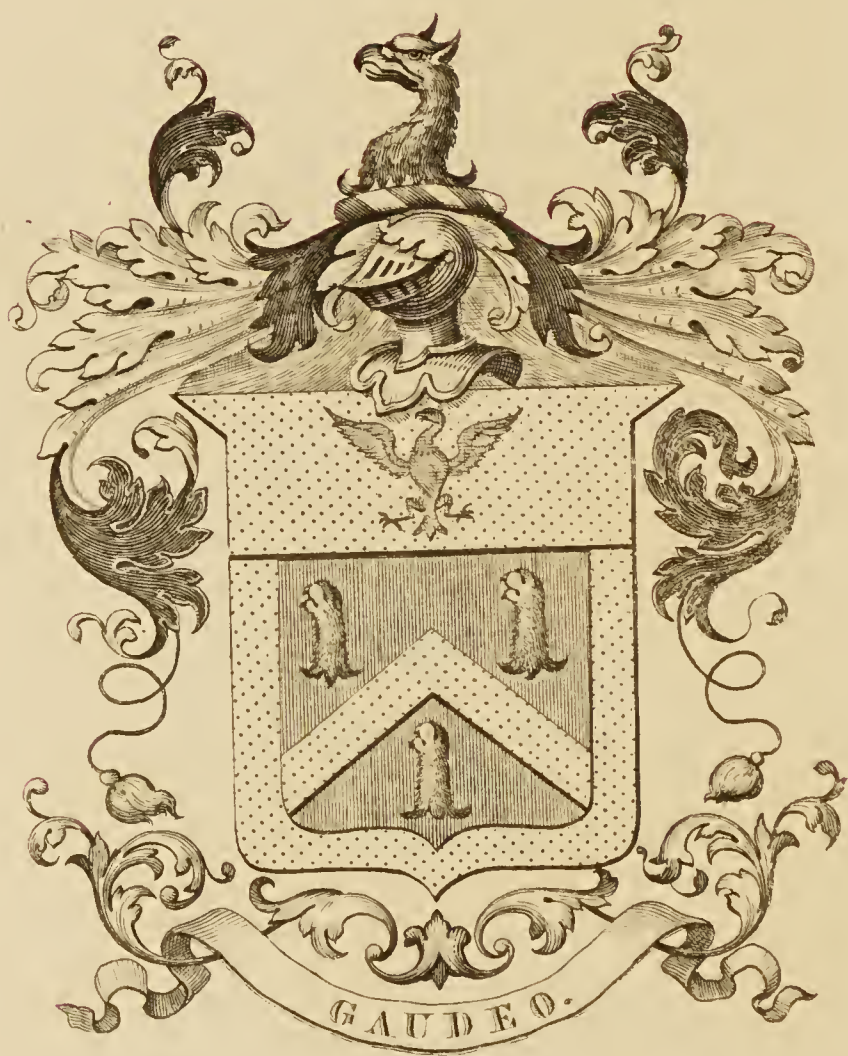






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John Carter Brown.



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A

# REFUTATION

Of a PAMPHLET, called

THOUGHTS on the late Transactions  
respecting FALKLAND's Islands;

IN A

# LETTER

ADDRESSED to the AUTHOR, and dedicated to Dr. SAMUEL  
JOHNSON.

*Here let those reign whom Pensions can incite  
To vote a patriot black, a courtier white;  
Explain their country's dear-bought rights away,  
And plead for pirates in the face of day;  
With slavish tenets taint our poisoned youth,  
And lend a lie the confidence of truth.*

Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

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T O

Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

S I R,

**T**HE following little piece, being an antidote against the poison conveyed in the pamphlet on Falkland's Islands, flies naturally to you for protection. The author, whose doctrines it exposes, is remarkable for his attachment to despotism and tyranny. You are renowned for your love of liberty and the constitution. To whom then can a constitutional writer dedicate his labours with more propriety? From your infancy you have invariably opposed the encroachments of the Tories on our laws and liberties, and the treasonable attacks of the Jacobites on the Protestant succession. Your pen has never defended an usurping king or a corrupt minister. You have always spoke of a pensioner with the utmost abhorrence and detestation. In your dictionary you define him to be *a state hireling, who, for wages, betrays his country*  
to



*to his master.* Mindful of this definition you have scorned to accept a pension. A man of your strict morality never could be guilty of such a glaring contradiction. To be paid like an old soldier or disabled seaman quartered on Chelsea or Greenwich hospital was too humiliating for a man, who pretends to be not only a philosopher but a sage. To charge, with a fresh burden, this country which is already loaded with a debt of an hundred and forty millions sterling, you could not reconcile to the principles of moral rectitude. You saw the act would be as unconscionable as to rob a person known to be upon the point of bankruptcy, or to tie a mill-stone about the neck of a drowning man. From these instances of your patriotism it was visible that you would enter into my views, and sympathize with your distressed country. Though you saw with dry Eyes the untimely fate of your daughter *Irene*, you can never remain unconcerned about the fortune of the publick, and of a

PATRIOTICK AUTHOR.



JOHN CARTER BROWN.

T O

THE AUTHOR OF

THOUGHTS on the late TRANSACTIONS  
respecting FALKLAND'S ISLANDS.

S I R,

IT is the misfortune of degenerate times, like ours, that they abound more in speculative than in practical moralists. The virtuous actions, of which many talk very scientifically, few perform. From deeds we have come to words; and all, that is left of ancient probity or publick virtue, is nothing but the sound. Instead of performing generous acts of friendship or disinterestedness, we write *Ramblers* or *Idlers*: Instead of making vigorous efforts to check the encroachments of tyranny, and to per-

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fect



fect the plan of liberty adopted by our forefathers, we publish *False Alarms* and *Thoughts on Falkland's Islands*.

The decay of publick spirit, and the corruption of genuine taste, go always hand in hand; both being the necessary consequences of weak and effeminate minds. It was in the days of *Nero* that *Seneca* lived; and it is in the reign of *George the Third* that *Johnson* flourishes. I hope there is nothing ominous in the conjunction. However much you have depraved the British literature, I hope that he will leave British liberty unimpaired.

I own, indeed, that there is some ground for apprehension, when a man of your pride stoops to the meanness of being the literary drudge of a faction, of which you can never become a member. It is not for a trifle that you belie the whole course of your former life, and defend the house of Hanover. Nor is it for a trifle that this house has wrought your conversion. There must be some grand object in view, when it makes profelytes of Tories and Jacobites. Will you tell us what honourable service procured the augmentation of your pension from three to five



five hundred pounds? Will you tell us what miracle has rendered your political creed so different from that which you professed in the late reign? When asked by a noble friend of the Brunswick line to write its history, you replied, *What! my Lord; among all your acquaintances can you find no scoundrel, that you propose this infamy to me?* But I understand you. The plan of government now adopted is congenial to your mind; and your natural antipathy to the family is lost in your satisfaction at the present acts of oppression. Even vipers, the natural enemies of man, may be tamed by feeding. Olympias knew the art of rendering them her friends. Who then can wonder that Johnson is reconciled to the house of Brunswick? It has good reason to receive you into its bosom; for you have on its altar made a sacrifice of your country and your character. The majority of the nation you call *Pygmy rebels*; and the men whose labour swells your pride, you treat with ridicule and contempt. The citizens of London and the electors of Middlesex, upon whom you actually live as a pensioner, you offer up to your idol as boors and barbarians. What must he think of this desertion? Though he should love the treason, he must hate the



traitor. He must perceive that you are ungrateful, and that ingratitude implies all infamy. *Ingratum si dixeris, omnia dixeris.*

But we live in the age of miracles. The common course of nature is now inverted. Rewards and honours are not conferred for publick services, but for publick crimes. Who would have expected to see \* Mr. Luttrell at the head of the Irish army, or lord North at the head of the English treasury? Both are indebted for their elevation to the same spirit which pensioned the two murderers, Macquirk and Maclean. *Aude aliquid brevibus Gyaris & carcere dignum*, attempt some daring villainy, knock out the brains of freeholders, write a *False Alarm*, or scribble a *Slyboots*; and your fortune is made. You become a favourite at St. James's; and you are gratified with a yearly pension of five hundred pounds, or a benefice of eight hundred in the church. Here is encouragement for men of spirit and adventure! Here is a glorious opening for the acquisition of wealth and fame! How happy it is for you to be born in such blessed times!

\* Though not the commander in chief, he is the *acting manager*.

When



When matters are thus circumstanced, when all desirable objects are so easily procured at home, why should we be surprized that you declaim so violently against seeking them abroad? You have found the philosopher's stone, or the art of transmuting a barren and useless rock into a rich mine of gold. Though Falkland's Island could hardly furnish Macbride with geese and snipes and cellery, you have in your closet experienced it to be a land flowing with milk and honey. The misfortune is, that the generality of men are unacquainted with the species of magick by which you effected this metamorphosis; and that the few who are capable of initiation in the mystery do not chuse to dip into the black art, or to make a compact with the devil.

But let us come to the point. You give a partial account of Falkland's Islands, of which this is the sum and substance. They were first discovered by the English, then by the Dutch, next by the French, from whom the Spaniards have lately borrowed the name of Malouines. They are, according to Macbride, barren and incapable of being rendered useful; but, according to Byron, they may with proper culture furnish



nish not only all the necessaries, but the conveniencies and luxuries of life. Wood is the only requisite that is wanting; and that will not grow, though cattle will thrive as in other places.

Now mark the absurdity and incredibility of this story. Macbride, upon whom all the ill fame of the island is chargeable, says that cattle will flourish in this region; but that young firs will die as soon as they appear above ground. But who will believe that this hardy tree, which succeeds best in cold climates, and grows to such an immense height in Norway, will immediately perish in the fiftieth degree of latitude, when goats, sheep, and hogs come to the usual degree of perfection? Macbride must be but an unskilful naturalist. He must have committed the seeds to the ground at an unseasonable time, or in an improper place. Nor did the garrison make better gardeners. For what can be more ridiculous in any men, than to say that the plants withered in immaturity through the severity of the climate, where cattle succeeded as in other places? Upon what did they feed but on the spontaneous productions of the soil? And is it not evident that plenty of grass  
is



is an infallible sign of rich land? Grass is but a species of plant, and where it thrives, most other vegetables will come to perfection.

But though we allow a very improbable supposition, that no trees will here come to maturity, yet the utility of the island is indisputable from the plenty of cattle which it is capable of producing. You confess that it may be of use in war; but you deny that it will be serviceable in peace. And why will it not be serviceable? Because, according to you, it will then be only a nest of privateers, buccaniers, thieves, and robbers, who will corrupt our manners, and spread the spirit of violence and rapine through the land. The logick is curious, and suitable to the rest of your performances. Why do you not likewise advise us to give up Jamaica and all our Leeward Islands? They also carry on a clandestine trade with the Spaniards. Nay, why do you not insist upon the resignation of all our sea-ports? There is hardly one of them that is not more or less concerned in smuggling; and by their practice they seem to countenance the opinion, that all ports ought to be free.

Your



Your pamphlet, like Rousseau's dreams, would give us to understand that you think the ideal perfection of a Platonick republick practicable. I wish you would yourself set the example, and, while you rail at piracy and robbery, not join the ministerial tribe in plundering and robbing the publick. Could you reason consistently, you would have seen that, when you allowed the utility of this settlement in war, you allowed its utility in peace. For what, I beseech you, is peace between rival nations, but the time fixed by mutual consent for recovering breath, and for renewing the struggle with redoubled vigour. That, therefore, is the wisest state which cultivates peace so as to have always an eye to war; because no guard against the violence of an enemy can be so good as the certain knowledge of your strength and preparations.

Thus then it appears from your own concessions, that Falkland Island is not such a despicable object as you would represent it, and that it will prove equally beneficial in peace and war.

It is in vain you urge that the value of any contested possession may be different



different to the losing and winning party. The question is not concerning what may be, but concerning what is the case. The late conduct of Spain shows that she thinks Falkland's Island of infinite consequence to us. What else but this consideration was the motive to the late act of violence? The possession of the place is of so little moment to her that she would never have thought of settling in it, but for the very purpose of dislodging our garrison. She has already more colonies on these coasts than she knows how to manage. Why then desire to extend them, but in order to prevent us from acquiring a footing in her neighbourhood? But in proportion as it is essential to her to secure the exclusive trade and navigation of these seas, in the same proportion is it necessary for us to contend for our share. Our seas and ports in all parts of the globe are open and free to all nations; and it is but reasonable that we should enjoy the same liberties which we grant.

In this division of the argument the only point which seems to deserve discussion, is whether the right to these islands is or is not vested in the crown of Great Britain? And that this is the case will, I think, bear

B little



little dispute. Two questions will settle the controversy. Were we the first discoverers? Were we the first settlers? Even you allow, though with reluctance, that we may answer the first question in the affirmative: Strong, Davies, and Hawkins having been the first by whom they were seen. Nor will the second admit of any other solution. At least had the Spaniards made a prior settlement, they would not have failed in the course of the negotiation to make use of the claim thence derived. They would undoubtedly have at once proved their priority of settlement and discovery, if such a proof could be produced. Their silence or vague declarations on these two heads are unanswerable arguments in favour of our right.

It is to little purpose you alledge that they have been for centuries the acknowledged sovereigns of the whole Magellanick region; because their sovereignty can never extend farther than their discoveries and settlements. The Magellanick region cannot be supposed to include countries which they never saw, or endeavoured to see, till they were alarmed by the neighbourhood of a powerful rival.

The



The importance of these islands, and our right to them, being thus ascertained, let us next inquire into the conduct of the ministry. You say that they received the first intelligence of Spain's hostile intentions from captain Hunt. But here you are guilty of a mistake, or of a misrepresentation. Several conferences about this subject passed between the Spanish ambassador and our minister long before the arrival of Hunt. Prince Masseran's testimony on this head remains uncontradicted by all but you. When Lord North and his associates were put in mind of this circumstance in the House of Commons, they chose to be silent, and submit with patience to the indignity of being detected in the act of withholding from the national representatives the information necessary to make them proper judges of the negotiation. They would not, indeed, say that no conversation had passed between them; but they pretended that no vestiges of it appeared in either of the two offices. But afterwards it was known by another channel that this was but an artifice to avoid an open declaration of the truth. You have heard only one side of the question. I was present at the debates on this subject. You will, there-



fore, allow that my testimony is not inferior to yours in credibility. If it wanted any additional sanction, it has that of all the minority in both houses. The protest of the lords and Mr. Dowdeswell's resolutions are equally explicit in its favour. Both these monuments aver that the Spanish ministers had brought on several discussions of the affair, from which our court might have foreseen the attack that was afterwards made by the forces of our rival.

Why then did not the ministers finally settle the matter with Spain at that juncture? Or, if they found her obstinate and absolutely resolved not to relax, why did they not gradually encrease the navy, and imperceptibly put the nation into a state of commanding justice? Such vigour would in all probability have prevented the violence which was afterwards offered, and little or no distress would have been felt by our trading interest. But, instead of taking this prudent step of their own accord, they refused to listen to such a proposal, when made by the earl of Chatham. Destitute of wisdom themselves, they would not profit by the wisdom of another. When the event justified the apprehensions of Chatham, they



they had, to save their honour, recourse to secrecy and dissimulation. Sensible of the disgrace which their improvidence, supineness, or treachery would bring upon their councils, they endeavoured to keep the matter a profound secret to the publick. But their efforts were fruitless. It took air; and none remained in ignorance but men, who, like you, will swallow camels, and have faith able to remove mountains.

Hence it is evident that our ministers were culpable in two respects, in not coming to a final eclaircissement with Spain when the quarrel first arose, and in not making due preparations when it was left in suspense. To suffer the enemy to be gradually augmenting their land and sea-forces, while we were indulging ourselves in the lap of ease and security, was a pitch of indiscretion that deserves a harsher name than folly. However great or powerful we may be, the direct road to the ruin of that greatness and power is to bring ourselves into a state that requires a sudden stop to be put to our trade and navigation, and to the protection of the laws. The commencement of an unexpected war is generally its most oppressive stage. The  
violence



violence of pressing, the stagnation of trade, and the fluctuation of the funds, contribute to render it peculiarly distressing; and it is the business of a good and wise ministry to profit by their intelligence, and to prevent its existence by early preparations.

Was this the plan adopted by the ministry? No; they designedly kept the nation in doubt and uncertainty, that their traffick in the alley might be the more lucrative. Knowing that such a situation would have a powerful effect upon the fears of the weak and credulous, they resolved to avail themselves of their opportunities of good information, and to grow rich by the spoils of the widow and the orphan. Was not Lord North charged, in open senate, with this crime by Colonel Barré? and had he a single word to offer in his own defence? No fact is more notorious. He and his associates, struck with conscious guilt, hung down their diminished heads, and sought relief from silence.

Thus every step of their conduct previous to the negotiation was inexcusable; and it is hard to say whether they were more deficient in prudence or honesty.

Now



Now let us examine what wisdom or firmness they discovered after the hostilities of Spain became known. Their demand was confined to the disavowal of Bucarelli's violent enterprize and to the restitution of Port Egmont; though, from the representations of the Spanish ambassador, they had the strongest reasons for believing that he had acted not only under the general laws of America, but also under the particular orders of the Catholick king, and though the Spanish minister first offered to restore the whole of the contested islands. Not content with these marks of imprudence and pusillanimity, they admitted the menacing mediation of France in favour of Spain, and thus contributed, in imitation of the peace-makers, to consolidate the Family-compact made by the Bourbons to terrify Europe into concessions.

Of these circumstances, which were ascertained in the course of the debates between the two parties, you chose for very obvious reasons to take no notice. They would have overturned the whole system of your sophistry, and exposed the iniquity of your masters in all its deformity. Perhaps, indeed, you did not know them; for  
you



you seem to have derived all your intelligence from the mutilated extracts that were published by Almon. You ought to have been informed that they contain but a part of the truth, and that he, who forms his judgment from them, must necessarily be subject to error. The protest of the Lords, and Mr. Dowdeswell's resolutions, contain the only just account of the transaction.

But this is not the whole of their guilt. They are not only chargeable with admitting a known falsehood as truth, with accepting a part for the whole, and submitting to the insults of France, our natural enemy: they may be also accused of having rendered doubtful, if not of relinquishing, our right to these islands, which was before incontestable. To allow Spain the reservation of the prior right of sovereignty which she claimed, and to talk of future discussion, was undoubtedly a tacit acknowledgment that we only possess them by the law of the stronger party, and therefore that they may be justly resumed, when that law no longer exists. What a fertile source of disputes and quarrels does this clause open? If we should be in no  
haste



haste to discuss the matter, Spain may ; and then you are immediately dispossessed. Her superiority of strength in the South Seas leaves you always at her mercy. When a favourable opportunity for a rupture offers, this pretence is always ready at her hand, and she will naturally seize upon it as a proper bone of contention.

It is in vain you ask whether the Swiss were less free or secure, because they were not declared independent before the peace of Westphalia. Till that period they could never esteem themselves secure ; the claim of Austria hung over their heads, and threatened their necks with the yoke of slavery. Had they been attacked, no nation could have any colourable pretext for giving assistance to rebels. But when that event took place, a fresh attempt would have alarmed the neighbouring powers, and procured protection to the Swiss. The whole world is governed by opinion ; and an opinion of right to any territory is the most intelligible to the minds of the vulgar, who constitute the majority, and finally determine who shall have actual possession. Nothing, therefore, can be more absurd in you than to ask, whether

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the king of France is less a sovereign, because the king of England partakes his title? However secure he may be at this juncture, the time may come, when the crown of England will avail itself of the title; and then it will be found how far names will operate upon the multitude.

So sensible were William the Bastard and Edward the Third of the efficacy of this principle, that they would not hazard an expedition into the countries which were the objects of their wishes, till they had propagated the notion of their right among the people; and every man, who knows any thing, knows that this precaution was of infinite service to their cause.

It was with reason, therefore, that Lord Chatham wanted to ask the judges, whether the king of England could hold any lands but in sovereignty? He knew that it was in a great measure owing to a contrary species of tenure that our transmarine dominions were dismembered from our empire, and reunited to the crown of France. Like a good patriot he was willing to prevent a similar disaster, and to render every part of the British possessions as secure as the nature of  
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of human affairs will admit. What though few princes are undisputed sovereigns throughout the whole extent of their dominions, does it thence follow that the British monarch ought to become a vassal to another state? The supposition is no less absurd than it is to imagine that, because he acknowledges no superior, he reigns at Port Egmont with sovereign authority. How many territories did England once possess without sovereignty? How many territories are now possessed without sovereignty? How dangerous has that circumstance always proved to the possession? It is not possession, but right, that confers sovereignty; and that right, which was, upon the principles of the law of nations, extremely clear, ought not to have been obscured and perplexed by new concessions. If every new acquired territory is in some degree controvertible, the controversy should not have been rendered more intricate, nor the claim of an enemy strengthened by our acts. The ministry should not have accepted of the contested islands but upon the terms on which they first occupied them; that is, as free and unincumbered possessions.



The forcible attack of Spain was founded on a full title and right of sovereignty. What reason can be given why restitution should be made in narrower or more ambiguous words than the claims on which her violence was grounded?

I own, that to push advantages too far is neither generous nor just. But is there any thing unjust or ungenerous in adhering to our undoubted right, or in circumscribing the power of our natural enemies, of a nation that has never spared us, and is now leagued with our inveterate foe? Here you discover the principle of your party, that treacherous spirit of concession which has always distinguished Tories and Jacobites. Charles the Second's Tories sold Dunkirk to the enemy: Queen Anne's Tories gave up innumerable conquests by the treaty of Utrecht; and George the Third's Tories resigned more still by the peace of Versailles. Not satisfied, however, with these marks of indulgence to our foes they have made an additional sacrifice by the convention; and you are the chosen priest, who are to sing hymns in their praise. In order to make your praises the less fulsome,



some, you labour hard to prove that we tacitly allowed the right of Spain, when, about twenty years ago, Mr. Pelham desisted from an intended expedition to these islands, and expressly disowned any design of making a settlement. But how can these acts determine the right? As he was entirely silent on that head, they only prove that he thought it imprudent to enforce our right at that juncture, and that he left it to be prosecuted by his successors at a more favourable opportunity.

With the same view you endeavour to render Falkland's Islands contemptible. But I think that I have, from your own concessions, proved the absurdity of your reasoning. Anson, whose judgment in naval affairs is not surely inferior to yours, insists upon their utility. Whence is it then that you are so angry with the minority for contending so eagerly for the titular sovereignty? You misrepresent them, when you say that they wished to see thousands murdered for this object. It was not for the titular sovereignty that they talked of war. The support of the national honour, the prevention of a disgraceful and short-lived compromise, the  
 exten-



extension of our trade in peace, and the security of our ships in war, were the considerations which made them desirous of a permanent settlement in the South Seas. Finding by the reservation of Spain that this permanence was not to be expected from negotiation, that she meant only to gain time, and to wait till she could strike a blow with more security and decision, they thought it advisable to seize opportunity by the forelock, and to crush her while she stood alone and unassisted. As France was in such a state of distraction that she could attempt nothing to our prejudice, they judged this the critical moment for breaking in pieces the whole fabrick of the Family Compact; an union of the most dangerous nature to the liberties of Europe, and peculiarly injurious to these realms, against which it seems to be chiefly aimed. They remembered how advantageous it proved to us, that the two great houses of Bourbon did not act in concert from the very beginning of the two last wars; and they were willing to profit by past experience, and to reduce the one before the other was in a condition to act on the offensive.

But



But you insinuate that foreign war might have put an end to her civil discords. What then? Can we ever expect to have a fairer opportunity, or to engage her with greater odds? Her people are so discontented, so feelingly alive to the injuries and multiplied oppressions under which they groan, that, were it not for the presence of the troops, there would be a general insurrection. The king and ministry are so fully convinced of this truth, that they would never dare to send their armies into foreign countries. Hence our ministers are inexcusable for not going to war, or at least, for not prescribing their own terms. The general situation of Europe dictated war. The northern powers, Russia, Austria, and Prussia are sufficiently employed in watching and traversing one another's projects. France is impotent; Holland is always neutral, and there is no other state of any weight.

Where then were the obstacles to the humiliation of Spain? According to you she would have found a sufficient defence in the storms of the deep and the vapours of the land, in the flames of calenture and blasts of pestilence. What then became of these



these bulwarks in the last war? Why did they not render the Havannah impregnable? Why did they not enable Manilla and its fourteen dependent isles to laugh at our efforts? These they surrendered with as much readiness as they did Martinico and Guadaloupe. Neither the scorching heat of the Torrid Zone, nor the piercing cold of the Frigid, could withstand our arms. We took, in spite of Spanish, in spite of French resistance, the Leeward isles, with the same ease that we conquered Canada. No place in any region was proof against our skill and prowess.

What calamity has since befallen us, that we should now be apprehensive of a power that we vanquished, when it was aided by the half of Europe? This question you will not be ready to solve. I will relieve your distress. We are governed, I beg pardon, we are misgoverned, oppressed, and enslaved by a desperate band of men, who have sold themselves and their constituents to the crown, and who, instead of conquering foreign enemies, make it their business to conquer and plunder their country.

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The damage, indeed, would have been the less, had the plunderers ever been serviceable to the publick in any department. Were their vices balanced by any virtues, were there any compensatory alleviation or shadow of equivalent for our loss, there would be some consolation. The evil would not come upon us pure and unmixed. But the misfortune is that the authors of our wrongs are pensioners and placemen, reptiles that would for ever have remained in their caterpillar state, were it not for the sunshine of a court, which has given the insects wings, and taught them to flutter and fly in our faces. Peace would undoubtedly be a very desirable object, did it secure to ourselves the wealth, which war squanders away upon agents, contractors, and commissaries. But that is not the case. We have not even the empty satisfaction of shouting at victories, or gazing at illuminations or fireworks; and yet our property is lavished upon *Ramblers*, and *Idlers*, and *Scots*. Though we do not enjoy the triumphs, we feel the expences of war. We gain neither honour, nor glory, nor wealth; yet we lose our liberty, our property, and credit. We sink in the estimation of foreign nations as well as in our

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own. The national character is degraded, and we become as unfit to resist foreign as domestick tyranny.

Does not this debasing picture shock your soul? Tyrannick as it is, it must feel for the disgrace of England; and, did not interest overpower conviction, we should once more see a miracle; we should behold Johnson pleading the cause of his injured country, and of outraged humanity.

Instead of taking this active part, instead of making early preparations, they left the security of the nation dependent on accident. Had it not been for the civil commotions in France, we were undone. And when they began to rouse, what mighty acts did they perform? At Spithead they ordered to rendezvous a fleet which was so rotten that it could not venture to sail. The very ships that were sent to convoy transports from Cork, were not able to keep the sea: one at least returned dismasted and disabled into harbour in order to be sheathed; the rest of the navy was not in a better condition. Had some of the minority been fully apprized of these circumstances, they would not perhaps have been so eager for  
war.



war. North knew them, and he patched up the convention.

While I thus apologize for the minority's propensity to war, I do not mean to insinuate that they had not just ideas of its calamities. Their knowledge and sensibility are at least equal to those of their antagonists ; and they have certainly a much better right to expatiate on the miseries of a state, which they have personally experienced, than any self-conceited dogmatist, whose notions have been entirely formed in his closet. It is because they were intimately acquainted with its horrors that they would have smothered it in embryo, and crushed the Spanish cockatrice in the egg. Past experience, and, indeed, common sense taught them that the best preservatives against hostile encroachments are spirit and vigour, and not pusillanimity and tame acquiescence. The conduct of Spain at the end of the last war was fresh in their memories ; and they were aware of recommending those treacherous counsels, which lost us the advantages so clearly pointed out by the great minister, whose character you so basely and ungratefully traduce ; a man, whose name will flourish



in immortal youth, when yours will stink and perish with your works. They were not to learn that the end of negotiation as well as of war, is peace, that war is the extremity of evil and the last of remedies. Such trite political maxims are only to be preached to children, and decide nothing. The decision of the whole question depended on the known character of the contending powers, on the complexion of the times, the inclinations of the different courts, the state of their finances and armies; in a word, on the general aspect of Europe. These are the considerations which have any weight with a statesman. Knowing that the standing armies of Europe have brought most nations into a state of continual warfare in fact or in expectation, he watches his time, and seizes the lucky minute for giving victory to his country. In such a situation, in a war of all against all, to be a citizen of the world, to talk of moderation, and of pushing advantages too far, smells strongly of the lamp, and sounds well but in the mouth of a millenarian or Fifth-monarchyman.

For you, indeed, there is an excuse. The prejudices of education are not easily  
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eradicated. You and your party have been so long accustomed to consider France and Spain as the friends of your friend over the water, that you may well mistake them sometimes for friends to England, and therefore be disposed, out of pure gratitude, to treat them with moderation and generosity. Accordingly you have, in every treaty in which you were concerned, been very bountiful, and took vast care not to push your advantages too far. In vain did the generalship of Marlborough reduce Flanders, and make the French king think of flying from his capital; in vain did the valour of Monkton conquer Martinico; in vain did the perseverance of Albemarle take the Havannah, or the gallantry of Draper the Philippine Isles; your Tories, in order to show their moderation and generosity, made a present of them all to *your* friends, but *our* enemies.

Why then should you blame the minority, who had neither the same motives nor the same views, for espousing the opposite side of the question? They meant to aggrandize Britain; you meant to aggrandize the Bourbons.

You



You say, indeed, that war would not produce the intended effect; and you say right, if your faction were to have the disposal of the conquests. They always take care to come into play at the close of a war, and to blast the fairest laurels. If the wars of civilized nations make but slow changes in the system of empire, to what is it owing? Not to the want of success in the field, but of honesty in the cabinet. At least this is the case with Britain. Were it not for the treachery of the Tories in negotiation, Marlborough in Queen Anne's time, and Pitt in our own time, would have effected mighty alterations. Why should we now despair of equal success? I see nothing that we have to fear, but your friends and patrons. The indifferent fortune of Queen Elizabeth's and Cromwell's armaments ought to be no rule to us. Our navy and naval power were then only in their infancy. Spain alone was greatly our superior once in the number and size of her ships. But things are now strangely altered. No nation, I had almost said no two nations, on the face of the globe can pretend to enter into competition with us on the watery element. In the last war, if it had pleased our ministers, we might, after  
taking



taking the Havannah, the key to South America, have conquered every settlement of consequence in one campaign. Neither France nor Spain could oppose us with sufficient forces by sea or by land. They had no way of conveying a land army to such distant regions, as they had no fleet, which durst venture into the open seas; and it is evident that the usual garrisons would make but a feeble resistance. The ease with which Anson mastered Lima, discovered the excessive weakness of the Spanish empire beyond the Line. Every intelligent person was sensible that, when the Havannah was taken, every thing was taken. The Spanish and French ambassadors acknowledged it, and allowed that England might now prescribe her own terms of peace.

So fully was the publick convinced of this truth that, when they found such immense concessions made, they could not be persuaded that the peace had not been purchased by Spanish Dollars and French Louis d'Ors. Hence the impeachment of Halifax by Musgrave; hence the reflections cast upon the Princess Dowager of Wales, and upon Bute and Holland. The suspicion of trea-  
son;



son, which fell upon them, was perhaps owing more to this cause than to actual corruption.

While the minority took this comprehensive view of things; while they contemplated the general state of Europe, the strength of Britain, the weakness of Spain, and the distraction of France, how could they think of any alternative but ample reparation, or immediate war? The injury received was flagrant; the insult offered to our flag unpardonable; and the reciprocal disavowal demanded ridiculous. Violence having been committed by Spain, and words only having dropt from us, what was more reasonable than to expect at once an immediate offer of restitution and satisfaction from Spain, or a declaration of war from England? If there was any probability of accommodation, why were we harassed with all the violence and burdened with all the expence of war? If there was no such probability, why was not war immediately declared? A nation ought at all times to be prepared for defence; but offensive preparations should only succeed the lost hopes of peace.

I do



I do not deny that peace is the end of warlike preparations as well as of war. But with a wise and magnanimous nation this ought only to be the case, when the strength of its antagonist is superior or at least equal to its own. Thus circumstanced it may from prudential motives dissemble the losses of preparation for fear of the greater losses to be apprehended from actual hostility. But will any but a North or a Johnson pretend that England was reduced to this humiliating state? No; had she but proper ministers, she was in a condition to give law to her enemies, and to command indemnification without striking a blow. Spain is not so punctilious about her honour as her wealth; and a king who could disavow his own orders, and assert a falsehood, might by his fears be brought to make the latter as well as the former concession. Had our ministers been possessed of that firmness which you would willingly attribute to them, they would have forced him into these terms. But the misfortune was that their fears were greater than those of the Spanish monarch. They trembled more for the loss of their places, than he did for the loss of his dollars. Conscious that they had neither credit nor abilities to

E

carry



carry on a war, and that the commencement of hostilities would be the conclusion of their reign, they chose rather to give up all claim to indemnification, and to make a kind of tacit resignation of the right of sovereignty, than to risk such capital objects.

In vain was it represented to them that such a plan of negotiation, if followed, would be the ruin of the most potent nation; that the feeblest rout of undisciplined Indians, or the most pitiful American tribe would upon these terms prove too hard for us: as they would have nothing to do but to commit some act of hostility, which would in preparations cost us three or four millions sterling, and then to make a simple restitution, and thus proceed with a succession of alternate hostilities and restitutions, till our exhausted riches, our wasted forces, and sunk spirits rendered us an easy prey.

These considerations had no weight with men who postponed every thing to their own interest, and had come into office for the sole purpose of dividing the spoils of the nation with a shameless majority, that  
expose



expose us and their own birth-right to sale. Careless what became of the flock, provided they had the greatest share of the fleece, they left us a prey to foreign wolves. Whether we have peace or war, we are equally undone. War is dangerous, and peace ruinous. In the very act of pacification we lose several millions, and are for our comfort, threatened with the prospect of domestick tyranny; the imposition of the long meditated yoke at home being a dearer object to our rulers than the chastisement of the common enemy abroad.

Spain and England quarrel about an island. They appeal to the law of nations. Grimaldi and North act as lawyers in this great cause. According to you our pettifogger gains the day; and yet we pay costs and damages. May England never more commit her honour or property to such a counsellor! What his incapacity spares, his treachery sacrifices.

But you have a salve for every sore, an universal specifick, a perfect balsam of Fierabras, to close up at once all the wounds given your knight-errant. Spain had honour to



lose, Spain demanded a reciprocal disavowal of Hunt's menaces, Spain would risk her very existence as an independent nation, rather than reimburse, or come to a speedy decision. All this you repeat, and repeat to no purpose; because the reasoning proceeds upon the supposition that we ought to treat those as friends, who have behaved to us as enemies; and that, when they smite us on the one cheek, we ought to turn the other also. Such a strain of Christian resignation is much better fitted for a congregation of Quakers, or the brain of a dreaming anchorite, than for the cabinet of a statesman.

But Don Francisco only acted under the general laws of America, and therefore he was blameless. I have already shewn the absurdity of this supposition. Grant it to be well founded, yet it will not justify our ministry; because they have obtained no disavowal of these general laws and orders, which are still more dangerous than the particular orders that have been disclaimed. The latter exclude us only from one island, the former exclude us for ever from the whole of the South Sea. These justify but one temporary act of hostility; those authorize



thorize an everlasting war beyond the Line. Instead, therefore, of preventing quarrels by this convention, they have, under a fallacious pretence of preventing one war, laid the foundation of a thousand.

When you thus apologize for the conduct of our enemies, why should we wonder that you are willing to let Bucarelli escape with impunity? In a favourite cause it costs you nothing to give up rights stipulated by express treaties. An injury was acknowledged by Spain, and yet, in contradiction to the seventeenth article of the treaty of Utrecht, no punishment is inflicted upon the party, by whom it was offered: nay there never was any mention made of such a necessary article of reparation. They passed it over in as profound silence as they did the insult offered to the British flag by the detention of the Favourite for twenty days, and by the indignity of taking away her rudder. You may be merry at this affront, and, by comparing it to the loss of the fox's tail, attempt in spite of nature to excite a smile. Nobody will join you in your Sardonian mirth. Englishmen will be agitated with other emotions. They feel and resent, as they ought, the  
 insolence



insolence of Spain, and burn with indignation at the pusillanimity of the ministers, who suffered the present reign to become the unhappy æra in which the honour of the British flag has sustained the first stain without the least reparation.

Thus have I shown that Falkland's Islands are of some consequence to Britain in peace as well as war; that our right to them both by discovery and settlement is certain; that this right should have been finally adjusted with Grimaldi when he brought it into discussion long before any hostility took place; that the ministry acted imprudently in not making gradual preparations, when they found that Spain would not relax; that they acted still more imprudently in not augmenting the navy according to Lord Chatham's advice; that they betrayed our rights by accepting a part for the whole, and by making a tacit resignation of the sovereignty of the contested island; that the situation of Europe dictated war; that our acknowledged superiority promised success; that they dishonoured our flag, and suffered express treaties to be infringed with impunity. These and many other points I have incontestably proved. Would not  
one



one half be sufficient to condemn the ministry beyond redemption? No man but a Tory or a Jacobite will have the effrontery to stand up in their defence; nor would even these open their mouths without pay. Your wages are known; and therefore none will pay you the least attention.

In vain you trust to the pomposity of your diction, and the solemn march of your periods. Boys alone take delight in seeing people walk upon stilts; and if you have a crowd in your train, it will be only a crowd of children. *Vellent tibi barbaram lascivi pueri, rex maxime regum.* Another Diogenes, you bark unnoticed at the publick from your tub, or, when you venture abroad, you are attended like the owl, not from attachment but antipathy. Numbers call for your writings in order to see the faults and not the beauties of style. None but the thoughtless and ignorant can compare the meretricious air of a courtesan to the chastised mien of a matron.

This language will, perhaps, appear strange to a man who thought himself the colossus of literature, that stood with a foot  
perched



perched on each summit of the forked hill, and bestriding the narrow world of authors, saw them all pass, like pygmies, under his legs. You will call such freedom rebellion against your sovereign authority. But you ought to remember that your authority is usurped, and that usurpation generally provokes resistance. Whatever you may think of the matter, there are men who will not allow that the first honours of learning are due only to a word-catcher, to a collector of hendecasyllables and sesquipedal expressions; bombast is not the sublime; nor is rudeness wit. Among dictionary-makers you may pass for a wit; but among wits you pass for a dictionary-maker. In that province you have merit, but merit of a peculiar sort: like the scuttlefish you obscure and confound the meaning of words, which were before clear and distinct. As a reasoner you are entitled to equal praise; for proofs you give us dogmatical assertions, and for a chain of well connected arguments you present us a string of detached sentences. As a preacher of morality you may supply the place of a bishop, and lull us asleep without going to church. It is not that your doctrine may not be very edifying, for ought that is known; un-  
for-



fortunately it is expressed in language that cannot be understood. Unwilling to throw away your pearls upon swine you wrap up your meaning in cloud-capped phrases, which you waggishly call English, but which the learned know to be a modern jargon of Latin and Greek. Hence those who speak most favourably of you, say, that, were the English language to decide your merit, she would be silent, as you have done her too much good to be blamed, and too much harm to be praised.

How true the story may be I cannot say; but I have heard it asserted, that your dictionary was written for your other works, and your other works for your dictionary. *Vamp* comes one morning to *Puff*, and says, What think you of a new dictionary? I am persuaded the scheme would take.—A dictionary of what, my friend? Of the English language?—Yes.—Alas! all our best books are written in good plain English, and easily understood without a dictionary.—Suppose then we publish a new work,

Some labour'd nothing in so strange a style  
That the unlearn'd will stare, the learned  
smile,

F

An



[ 22 ]

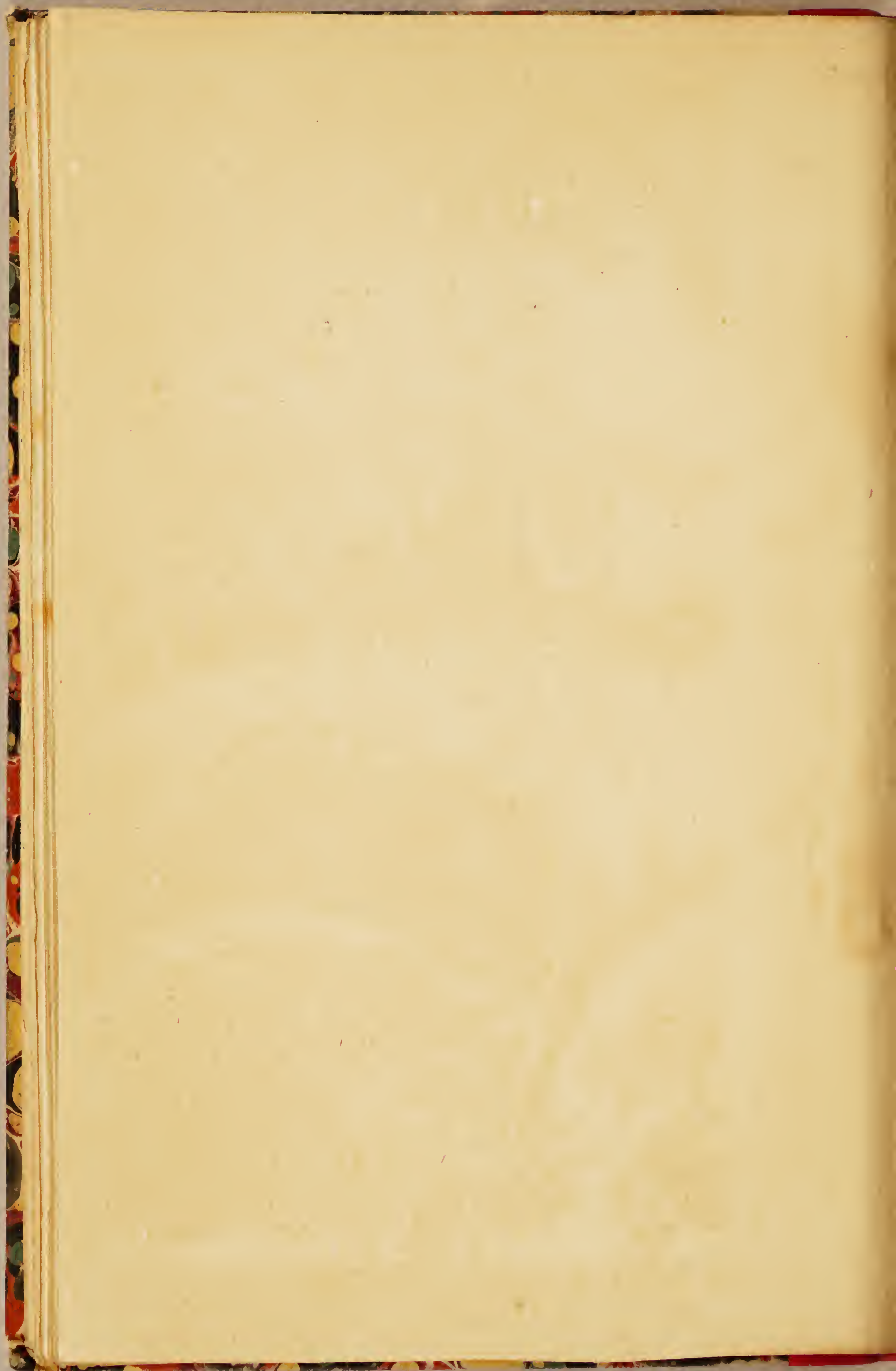
An excellent thought! as I hope to be saved; and then a dictionary will be absolutely necessary for its explanation.—Thus, according to the old axiom, nothing produces nothing; from the vacuums of a scheming bookseller's head, and a visionary monk's scull, proceeded two nothings, a Rambler, and a Dictionary of the English language. Had you never put on your buckram suit, or used your cabalistical expressions, but when you went to conjure the Cock-lane ghost, they would not have been liable to much objection. Had you grinned horribly your usual ghastly smile, such horrid features and barbarous sounds might not only have laid the ghost, but, as Churchill says, put the devil himself to flight.

F I N I S.











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